

## **URBAN DESIGN ELEMENT**

Urban design addresses a wide range of issues, including the visual impact of new development, the compatibility of new development with the existing community and the natural landscape, and perceptions of image, identity and character within a community. Other elements within this plan address the location, timing, and sequence of development and facilities. The Urban Design Element is vital to the cohesiveness between the other elements of the plan because it deals with the quality and form that new development will take.

Although Southeastern San Diego is a predominantly urbanized community, several vacant developable tracts are located within the community. The scale and design of new development, as well as redevelopment of existing properties, has the potential to affect the quality of the community to a great extent.

### **Urban Design Objectives**

1. Improve the visual and physical character of the community.
2. Encourage compatibility between new structures and existing neighborhoods.
3. Upgrade the quality of new multi-family residential development.
4. Enhance the community's image through streetscape improvements along major streets and within the neighborhoods.

### **Urban Design Recommendations**

The following urban design guidelines are intended to be applied to all new development and rehabilitation within the Southeastern San Diego community.

## RESIDENTIAL GUIDELINES

### Scale

- Small courtyard, cluster and row house residences of 10-15 dwelling units are recommended for multi-family residential development.
- New multi-family developments should be limited in size. Larger proposals should develop a mix of housing types and incorporate owner-occupied dwellings.
- The transitions and visual relationships between new and older buildings should be harmonious. A conscious effort to achieve balanced and compatibility between new and older buildings is needed. This can be accomplished by repeating existing building lines and surface treatment and by gradual transitions in height, bulk and density. Abrupt differences in scale are to be avoided.
- Where new buildings are larger than existing structures, large surfaces should be articulated and textured to reduce their apparent size and to reflect the pattern of existing buildings.
- Where lot consolidation takes place, special consideration should be given to adjacent parcels to ensure that new development does not visually overwhelm neighboring areas.
- Building bulk should be controlled through the use of ground level and upper level setbacks, facade variation and other architectural features (recessed entryways, porches, balconies, bay windows) which serve to break up building facades into smaller-scale visual components. Long continuous building masses that create a wall effect shall be avoided.



## Site and Building Design

In new developments, repetitious use of identical style and type of dwellings should be avoided. Larger projects in particular result in greater visual prominence of development. Using a variety of structures can result in a more interesting appearance, and can also produce a wider range of housing costs.

Use of staggered setbacks, varied building heights, widths, shapes, orientations, and colors should be incorporated. Protected courtyards, verandas, facades and porches are also encouraged to promote building variety.

- New residential development should be integrated with existing street and sidewalk patterns rather than being designed as an enclave or complex apart from the neighborhood. Sidewalks should be provided along at least one side of all private streets and should link in a clear manner to existing pedestrian and bicycle ways.
- Buildings should be oriented toward the public street. Each dwelling should visibly relate to the street. Units hidden on the back portion of the site or behind another building should be avoided. Visible street entrances or street facing courtyards with dwellings entered from the courtyard are encouraged. The same standards should be applied to buildings with alley frontage.
- Locate potentially noisy areas like playgrounds and parking areas away from dwelling units where possible.
- In areas designated as a “Special Character Multi-Family Neighborhoods,” tailored design standards should be adopted to limit the size of lot consolidations and to regulate the placement of additional units on a lot in order to maintain the traditional pattern of front and rear units. The tailored standards should also require that the color and design of any new unit(s) added to a lot be complementary to the existing structure(s).

## Landscaped Open Areas

- **Common Landscaped Open Areas.** Provide common outdoor areas that are usable in all seasons, including shaded areas for outdoor use in warm months.
- Consider the special needs of each group of the expected residents.
- Provide sidewalks between important shared facilities and to important off-site destinations such as transit stops.
- **Private Landscaped Open Areas.** In addition to common landscaped open areas, private open areas should be provided for each unit. This may be a garden, courtyard, terrace or roof deck.
- When located on ground level, open areas should be screened from public view by landscaping, courtyard walls, or privacy fences.

- On sloping sites, landscaped open areas should be sensitively terraced or provided in decks or balconies.
- The requirements for private usable open areas could be reduced if a project provides some common usable open areas on the site.
- Private open areas should be oriented to receive good sun penetration and provide shaded areas for outdoor use in the warmest months.

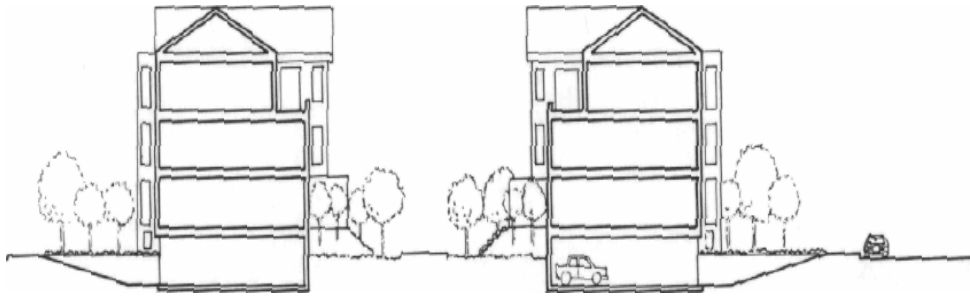


### **Parking Areas for Residential Development**

- Off-street parking areas should be designed to minimize their visual impact on the site and surrounding neighborhood. Where appropriate and subject to project review, parking spaces should be incorporated into building design using tuck-under parking for sloping sites.
- Parking should be placed in unobtrusive locations to minimize their visual impact. Shrub planting, low walls or trees can be used to partially screen and still allow an opportunity for surveillance.
- Parking areas should be landscaped at regular intervals using planting islands.
- For multi-family developments, a portion of the parking area should be enclosed by garages, carports or trellises.
- Garages and carports should be designed to relate in design and scale to the residential units and should not significantly block views from the street into the project area.



Use shrub planting, low walls, earth berms, and tree planting to give eye level relief at parking areas.

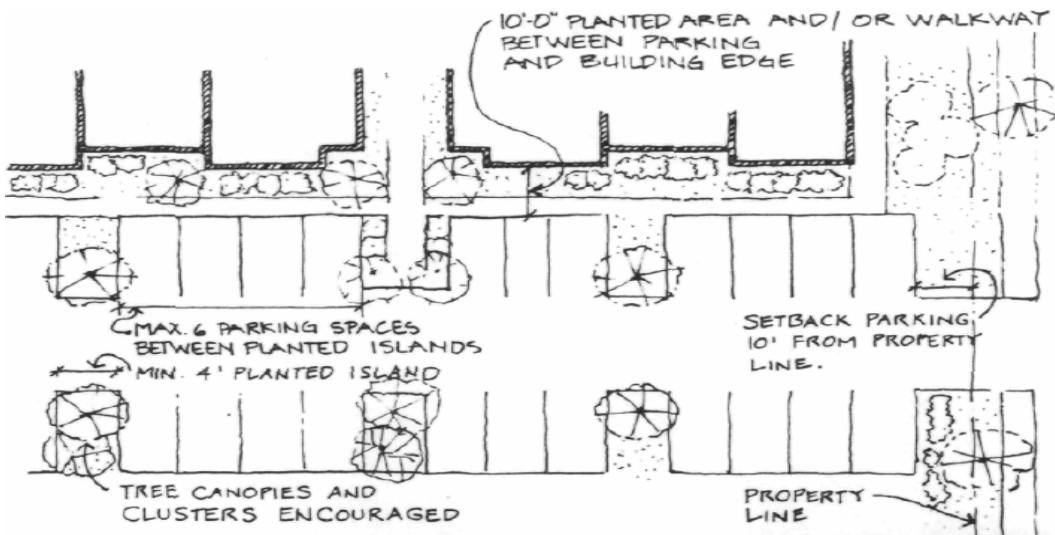


Tuck-under parking, level site



Tuck-under parking, sloping site

- Parking should not be placed between the front of a residential building and the street. Consideration should be given to prohibiting parking in the required front and side yard areas.
- A minimum landscaped and/or walkway area should be provided between all parking areas and the building.
- Trash facilities should be easily accessible and designed to be an integral part of the project.
- Consider special areas for bicycle parking.





Provide landscaping in parking/walkway areas.